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79 GEORGETOWN 3826

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ACTION SCS-06
INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 ISO-00 CA-01 L-03 FBIE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 H-01 AID-05 SS-15 SP-02
CCO-00 /056 W
------------------113785 211335Z /41

Z 211235Z NOV 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 5112
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC, OREP (RYAN LEO) GY
SUBJECT: PEOPLES TEMPLE: DISPOSITION OF REMAINS.
REF: STATE 284529
1. EMBASSY AGREES ENTIRELY WITH THE COURSE OF ACTION SET FORTH IN REFTEL. EYE WITNESS REPORTS BY ACTING DCM VICTOR DIKEOS AND CONSUL JOHN ADAMS HAD ALREADY CONFIRMED THAT THE SITUATION AT JONESTOWN IS ALREADY CRITICAL, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF THE POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARD AND THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFICATION OF REMAINS.
2. AMBASSADOR IS REQUESTING URGENT APPOINTMENT WITH MINISTER HAMILTON GREEN, CHAIRMAN OF THE GOG TASK FORCE. AT THIS MEETING AMBASSADOR WILL MAKE POINTS SET FORTH IN PARA 1 REFTEL. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE BE ABLE TO ASSURE GOG THAT U.S. RESOURCES ALREADY IN COUNTRY AND THOSE DUE TO ARRIVE WITHIN THE NEXT 48 HOURS BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE LOCAL INTERNMENT OPERATION. WE MUST NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE NOW INCLINED TO LEAVE THIS PROBLEM FOR THE GOG TO RESOLVE ON ITS OWN. THUS WHEN SUGGESTING THE
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LOCAL BURIAL OPTION WITH MINISTER GREEN, I REQUEST AUTHORITY TO BE ABLE TO ASSURE HIM ON THIS POINT WHICH IS CERTAIN TO ARISE.
3. ASSUMING GOG CONCURRENCE, WE WILL THEN MOVE AT ALL POSSIBLE SPEED TO ACCOMPLISH LOCAL INTERNMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL LAW AND WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT DISINTERNMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN THE FUTURE IN INDIVIDUAL CASES IF THE NEXT OF KIN REQUESTED AND WOULD BE WILLING TO BEAR THE EXPENSE. IN ACCOMPLISHING LOCAL INTERNMENT EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO IDENTIFY THE REMAINS AND SUITABLE MARKERS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL GRAVES WILL BE SET IN PLACE. IT MUST BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SEVERAL OF THE BODIES HAVE DECOMPOSED TO THE POINT WHERE IDENTIFICATION WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE. WE MUST BE PREPARED, THEREFORE, FOR THE POSSIBLILITY THAT AS MANY AS 20-25 PERCENT OF THE BODIES MAY NEVER BE IDENTIFIED.
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY ____ DATE ____
RDS□or XDS□EXT. DATE ____
TS AUTH. ____ REASON(S) ____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS □
DECLASSIFIED□ NEW MARKINGS □
RELEASE IN PART□
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS ____

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4. UNDOUBTEDLY THE LOCAL INTERNMENT OPTION WILL NOT BE POPULAR IN SOME QUARTERS. NEVERTHELESS, IN VIEW OF THE ACUTE HEALTH PROBLEM THAT IS GROWING WITH EVERY PASSING HOUR, THAT OPTION SEEMS TO US TO BE ENTIRELY DEFENSIBLE ON HEALTH AND HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE THAT GEORGETOWN IS STILL FLOODED WITH FOREIGN PRESS IN SEARCH OF ANY STORY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS DISASTER. WERE THEY TO HAVE AN IMPRESSION THAT THE USG IS BACKING AWAY FROM ITS ORIGINAL COMMITMENT TO BE DIRECTLY AND IMPORTANTLY INVOLVED WITH THE DISPOSITION OF REMAINS, THEY WOULD BE QUICK TO FOCUS ON THAT. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE ALREADY SOME NEXT OF KIN ARRIVING IN GEORGETOWN FROM THE U.S. BECAUSE

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OF THE INACCESSIBILITY OF JONESTOWN, THEY HAVE BEEN PRESSING US TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION TO THE SITE AND IN SOME CASES MAY BE REQUESTING IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT OF REMAINS TO THE U.S. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY BEYOND ANY GUYANESE FUNEREAL CAPABILITY. IT IS IMPORTANT THEREFORE THAT THEY BE MADE AWARE THAT THE USG IS MOVING PROMPTLY, WITH THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT, TO ARRANGE LOCAL INTERNMENT IN A DIGNIFIED MATTER.

5. REQUEST AUTHORITY TO MAKE COMMITMENT TO GOG (PARA 2 ABOVE) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

BURKE

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